GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:276
ANSWERED ON:01.12.2015
Reduction in ESA
Senguttuvan Shri Balasubramaniam

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to reduce the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) in the Western Ghats from 56000-odd Square Kilometeres to about 50000 Square Kilometres and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the ecologically sensitive areas of the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat are likely to be reduced for sustainable development and if so, the details thereof:
(c)whether the reduced ESA would adversely affect the lives and livelihood of the people in these States and if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
(d) whether the Government would put a moratorium on setting up of any polluting industry near the ESA and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (c): The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has issued a draft Notification dated 04.09.2015 for notifying an area of 56,825 sq.km as ecologically sensitive in the Western Ghats, while permitting sustainable development of the region. Proposals for demarcating ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs) have been received from the States of Kerala, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat, wherein some of the States have proposed reduction of ESA in their State.

(d) The draft Notification dated 04.09.2015, vide provisions contained in Section (3) (1) (a), (b), (c) & (d), has proposed to prohibit certain projects and activities in eco-sensitive areas of Western Ghats. However, in order to provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity, the Ministry issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November 2013. As per the Directions, the five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on ecosystems shall not be considered for granting Environmental Clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), as identified by the High Level Working Group, in the Western Ghats.

There is no proposal with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for putting a moratorium on setting up of any polluting industry in areas outside proposed eco-sensitive areas in Western Ghats.
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